

## CLAIMS

1. An optical packet exchanger for switching a transmission path for an optical packet which constitutes a burst-type optical signal, comprising:

an optical transmitter section for transmitting an optical packet, on which an information signal and an address signal corresponding to a transmission destination for the information signal are superposed by different modulation methods;

10 an optical transmission section for propagating an optical packet transmitted from the optical transmitter section; and  
a router section for receiving the optical packet via the optical transmission section, and switching a transmission path for the optical packet based on the address signal which is extracted  
15 from the optical packet.

2. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 1, wherein,

the optical transmitter section includes:

20 a light source for outputting continuous light; and  
an optical modulation section for outputting an optical packet which is obtained by subjecting the output light from the light source to an intensity modulation using the information signal and a phase modulation using the address signal,

25 the router section includes:

an optical splitter section for splitting the optical packet received via the optical transmission section into two optical packets;

5 an address reading section for reading the address signal based on phase information of one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section; and

10 a path switching section having a plurality of output ports and selecting, based on the address signal read by the address reading section, one of the plurality of output ports from which to output the other optical packet output from the optical splitter section.

3. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 1, wherein,

15 the optical transmitter section includes:

a light signal source for outputting continuous light having been subjected to an intensity modulation using the information signal; and

20 an optical modulation section for outputting an optical packet which is obtained by subjecting the output light from the light signal source to a phase modulation using the address signal, and

the router section includes:

25 an optical splitter section for splitting the optical packet received via the optical transmission section into two

optical packets;

an address reading section for reading the address signal based on phase information of one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section; and

5 a path switching section having a plurality of output ports and selecting, based on the address signal read by the address reading section, one of the plurality of output ports from which to output the other optical packet output from the optical splitter section.

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4. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 1, wherein,

the optical transmitter section includes:

a light signal source for outputting continuous light  
15 having been subjected to a phase modulation using the address signal; and

an optical modulation section for outputting an optical packet which is obtained by subjecting the output light from the light signal source to an intensity modulation using the  
20 information signal, and

the router section includes:

an optical splitter section for splitting the optical packet received via the optical transmission section into two optical packets;

25 an address reading section for reading the address

signal based on phase information of one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section; and

a path switching section having a plurality of output ports and selecting, based on the address signal read by the address reading section, one of the plurality of output ports from which to output the other optical packet output from the optical splitter section.

5. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 1,  
10 wherein,

the optical transmitter section includes:

a light source for outputting continuous light; and  
an optical modulation section for outputting an optical packet which is obtained by subjecting the output light  
15 from the light source to an intensity modulation using the information signal and a phase modulation using the address signal,  
and

the router section includes:

an optical splitter section for splitting the optical  
20 packet received via the optical transmission section into two optical packets;

an address reading section for reading the address signal based on phase information of one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section;

25 an optical phase adjustment section for adjusting a

phase of the other optical packet output from the optical splitter section to a constant phase value, based on the address signal read by the address reading section; and

5           a path switching section having a plurality of output ports and selecting, based on the address signal read by the address reading section, one of the plurality of output ports from which to output the other optical packet whose phase has been adjusted to the constant phase value by the optical phase adjustment section.

10         6. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 1, wherein,

the optical transmitter section includes:

15         a light signal source for outputting continuous light having been subjected to an intensity modulation using the information signal; and

an optical modulation section for outputting an optical packet which is obtained by subjecting the output light from the light signal source to a phase modulation using the address signal, and

20         the router section includes:

an optical splitter section for splitting the optical packet received via the optical transmission section into two optical packets;

25         an address reading section for reading the address signal based on phase information of one of the optical packets

output from the optical splitter section;

an optical phase adjustment section for adjusting a phase of the other optical packet output from the optical splitter section to a constant phase value, based on the address signal

5 read by the address reading section; and

a path switching section having a plurality of output ports and selecting, based on the address signal read by the address reading section, one of the plurality of output ports from which to output the other optical packet whose phase has been adjusted

10 to the constant phase value by the optical phase adjustment section.

7. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 1, wherein,

the optical transmitter section includes:

15 a light signal source for outputting continuous light having been subjected to a phase modulation using the address signal; and

an optical modulation section for outputting an optical packet which is obtained by subjecting the output light  
20 from the light signal source to an intensity modulation using the information signal, and

the router section includes:

an optical splitter section for splitting the optical packet received via the optical transmission section into two  
25 optical packets;

an address reading section for reading the address signal based on phase information of one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section;

5 an optical phase adjustment section for adjusting a phase of the other optical packet output from the optical splitter section to a constant phase value, based on the address signal read by the address reading section; and

10 a path switching section having a plurality of output ports and selecting, based on the address signal read by the address reading section, one of the plurality of output ports from which to output the other optical packet whose phase has been adjusted to the constant phase value by the optical phase adjustment section.

8. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 2,  
15 wherein,

the optical modulation section comprises:

an optical splitter section for splitting the output light from the light source into two light portions;

20 a first splitter section for splitting the address signal into two address signals;

a second splitter section for splitting the information signal into two information signals;

a phase inversion section for inverting a phase of one of the information signals output from the second splitter section;

25 a first synthesis section for combining one of the address

signals output from the first splitter section with the information signal whose phase has been inverted by the phase inversion section, to output a first synthesized signal;

5       a second synthesis section for combining the other address signal output from the first splitter section with the other information signal output from the second splitter section, to output a second synthesized signal;

10      a first waveguide for subjecting one of the light portions output from the optical splitter section to a phase modulation using the first synthesized signal;

      a second waveguide for subjecting the other light portion output from the optical splitter section to a phase modulation using the second synthesized signal; and

15      an optical synthesis section for permitting optical synthesis and interference between the optical phase modulated signal output from the first waveguide and the optical phase modulated signal output from the second waveguide to generate the optical packet.

20       9. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 5, wherein,

      the optical modulation section comprises:

      an optical splitter section for splitting the output light from the light source into two light portions;

25      a first splitter section for splitting the address signal

into two address signals;

a second splitter section for splitting the information signal into two information signals;

5 a phase inversion section for inverting a phase of one of the information signals output from the second splitter section;

a first synthesis section for combining one of the address signals output from the first splitter section with the information signal whose phase has been inverted by the phase inversion section, to output a first synthesized signal;

10 a second synthesis section for combining the other address signal output from the first splitter section with the other information signal output from the second splitter section, to output a second synthesized signal;

a first waveguide for subjecting one of the light portions 15 output from the optical splitter section to a phase modulation using the first synthesized signal;

a second waveguide for subjecting the other light portion output from the optical splitter section to a phase modulation using the second synthesized signal; and

20 an optical synthesis section for permitting optical synthesis and interference between the optical phase modulated signal output from the first waveguide and the optical phase modulated signal output from the second waveguide to generate the optical packet.

10. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 1,  
wherein,

a modulation speed for the address signal and a modulation  
speed for the information signal are different.

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11. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 2,  
wherein,

the address reading section includes:

10 a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting an  
optical signal which is obtained by converting optical phase  
variation in one of the optical packets output from the optical  
splitter section into optical intensity variation; and

15 a photoelectric conversion section for converting the  
optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section  
into an address signal.

12. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 3,  
wherein,

the address reading section includes:

20 a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting an  
optical signal which is obtained by converting optical phase  
variation in one of the optical packets output from the optical  
splitter section into optical intensity variation; and .

25 a photoelectric conversion section for converting the  
optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section

into an address signal.

13. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 4,  
wherein,

5 the address reading section includes:

a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting an optical signal which is obtained by converting optical phase variation in one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section into optical intensity variation; and

10 a photoelectric conversion section for converting the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into an address signal.

14. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 5,  
15 wherein,

the address reading section includes:

a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting an optical signal which is obtained by converting optical phase variation in one of the optical packets output from the optical 20 splitter section into optical intensity variation; and

a photoelectric conversion section for converting the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into positive and negative address signals, the negative address signal being obtained by inverting the polarity of the positive 25 address signal, and outputting the positive address signal to the

path switching section and the negative address signal to the optical phase adjustment section.

15. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 6,

5 wherein,

the address reading section includes:

a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting an optical signal which is obtained by converting optical phase variation in one of the optical packets output from the optical 10 splitter section into optical intensity variation; and

a photoelectric conversion section for converting the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into positive and negative address signals, the negative address signal being obtained by inverting the polarity of the positive 15 address signal, and outputting the positive address signal to the path switching section and the negative address signal to the optical phase adjustment section.

16. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 7,

20 wherein,

the address reading section includes:

a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting an optical signal which is obtained by converting optical phase variation in one of the optical packets output from the optical 25 splitter section into optical intensity variation; and

a photoelectric conversion section for converting the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into positive and negative address signals, the negative address signal being obtained by inverting the polarity of the positive  
5 address signal, and outputting the positive address signal to the path switching section and the negative address signal to the optical phase adjustment section.

17. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 5,  
10 wherein,

the address reading section includes:

a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting positive and negative optical signals, the positive optical signal being obtained by converting optical phase variation in one of  
15 the optical packets output from the optical splitter section into optical intensity variation, and the negative optical signal being obtained by inverting the polarity of the positive optical signal;

a first photoelectric conversion section for converting the positive optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion  
20 section into an address signal and outputting the address signal to the path switching section; and

a second photoelectric conversion section for converting the negative optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into an address signal, and outputting the  
25 address signal to the optical phase adjustment section.

18. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 6,  
wherein,

the address reading section includes:

5           a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting positive and negative optical signals, the positive optical signal being obtained by converting optical phase variation in one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section into optical intensity variation, and the negative optical signal being  
10          obtained by inverting the polarity of the positive optical signal;

15          a first photoelectric conversion section for converting the positive optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into an address signal and outputting the address signal to the path switching section; and

20          a second photoelectric conversion section for converting the negative optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into an address signal, and outputting the address signal to the optical phase adjustment section.

20          19. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 7,  
wherein,

the address reading section includes:

25          a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting positive and negative optical signals, the positive optical signal being obtained by converting optical phase variation in one of

the optical packets output from the optical splitter section into optical intensity variation, and the negative optical signal being obtained by inverting the polarity of the positive optical signal;

5 a first photoelectric conversion section for converting the positive optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into an address signal and outputting the address signal to the path switching section; and

10 a second photoelectric conversion section for converting the negative optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into an address signal, and outputting the address signal to the optical phase adjustment section.

20. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 11, wherein,

15 the photoelectric conversion section converts an intensity of the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section to logic value 1 if the intensity is equal to or less than a predetermined threshold value and to logic value 0 if the intensity is greater than the predetermined threshold value, thereby  
20 extracting the address signal.

21. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 14, wherein,

25 the photoelectric conversion section converts an intensity of the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion

section to logic value 1 if the intensity is equal to or less than a predetermined threshold value and to logic value 0 if the intensity is greater than the predetermined threshold value, thereby extracting the address signal.

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22. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 17, wherein,

the photoelectric conversion section converts an intensity of the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section to logic value 1 if the intensity is equal to or less than a predetermined threshold value and to logic value 0 if the intensity is greater than the predetermined threshold value, thereby extracting the address signal.

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23. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 20, wherein,

the threshold value is equal to or greater than a value which is 1/4 as large as a difference between an optical intensity of the optical packet input to the optical splitter section at logic value 1 and an optical intensity of the optical packet at logic value 0, and is equal to or less than a value which is 1/2 as large as the optical intensity of the optical packet at logic value 0.

24. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 21, wherein,

the threshold value is equal to or greater than a value which  
is 1/4 as large as a difference between an optical intensity of  
the optical packet input to the optical splitter section at logic  
value 1 and an optical intensity of the optical packet at logic  
5 value 0, and is equal to or less than a value which is 1/2 as large  
as the optical intensity of the optical packet at logic value 0.

25. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 22,  
wherein,

10 the threshold value is equal to or greater than a value which  
is 1/4 as large as a difference between an optical intensity of  
the optical packet input to the optical splitter section at logic  
value 1 and an optical intensity of the optical packet at logic  
value 0, and is equal to or less than a value which is 1/2 as large  
15 as the optical intensity of the optical packet at logic value 0.

26. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 11,  
wherein,

the phase/intensity conversion section comprises a  
20 Mach-Zehnder interferometer.

27. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 14,  
wherein,

the phase/intensity conversion section comprises a  
25 Mach-Zehnder interferometer

28. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 17,  
wherein,

the phase/intensity conversion section comprises a  
5 Mach-Zehnder interferometer.

29. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 11,  
wherein,

the phase/intensity conversion section outputs two optical  
10 signals whose modulated components are out of phase.

30. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 29,  
wherein,

the photoelectric conversion section comprises two  
15 photodiodes for respectively detecting the two optical signals  
output from the phase/intensity conversion section.

31. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 1,  
wherein,

20 the optical transmitter section includes:

a light source for outputting continuous light; and  
an optical modulation section for outputting an  
optical packet which is obtained by subjecting the output light  
from the light source to a phase modulation using the information  
25 signal and an intensity modulation using the address signal, and

the router section includes:

an optical splitter section for splitting the optical packet received via the optical transmission section into two optical packets;

5 an address reading section for reading the address signal from intensity information of one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section; and

10 a path switching section having a plurality of output ports and selecting, based on the address signal read by the address reading section, one of the plurality of output ports from which to output the other optical packet output from the optical splitter section.

32. The optical packet exchanger according to claim 1,  
15 wherein,

the optical transmitter section includes:

a light source for outputting continuous light; and

20 an optical modulation section for outputting an optical packet which is obtained by subjecting the output light from the light source to a phase modulation using the information signal and an intensity modulation using the address signal, and  
the router section includes:

25 an optical splitter section for splitting the optical packet received via the optical transmission section into two optical packets;

an address reading section for reading the address signal from intensity information of one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section;

5 an optical intensity adjustment section for adjusting an intensity of the other optical packet output from the optical splitter section to a constant intensity value, based on the address signal read by the address reading section; and

10 a path switching section having a plurality of output ports and selecting, based on the address signal read by the address reading section, one of the plurality of output ports from which to output the other optical packet whose intensity has been adjusted to the constant intensity value by the optical intensity adjustment section.

15 33. A router for switching a transmission path for an optical packet which constitutes a burst-type optical signal and on which an information signal and an address signal corresponding to a transmission destination for the information signal are superposed by different modulation methods, the router comprising:

20 an optical splitter section for splitting the optical packet into two optical packets;

an address reading section for reading the address signal based on phase information of one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section; and

25 a path switching section having a plurality of output ports

and selecting, based on the address signal read by the address reading section, one of the plurality of output ports from which to output the other optical packet output from the optical splitter section.

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34. The router according to claim 33, further comprising an optical phase adjustment section for adjusting a phase of the other optical packet output from the optical splitter section to a constant phase value based on the address signal read by the  
10 address reading section, and thereafter outputting the other optical packet to the path switching section.

35. The router according to claim 33, wherein,  
the address reading section includes:  
15 a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting an optical signal which is obtained by converting optical phase variation in one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section into optical intensity variation; and  
a photoelectric conversion section for converting the  
20 optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into an address signal.

36. The router according to claim 34, wherein,  
the address reading section includes:  
25 a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting an

optical signal which is obtained by converting optical phase variation in one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section into optical intensity variation; and

5       a photoelectric conversion section for converting the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into positive and negative address signals, the negative address signal being obtained by inverting the polarity of the positive address signal, and outputting the positive address signal to the path switching section and the negative address signal to the  
10      optical phase adjustment section.

37. The router according to claim 34, wherein,

the address reading section includes:

a phase/intensity conversion section for outputting  
15      positive and negative optical signals, the positive optical signal being obtained by converting optical phase variation in one of the optical packets output from the optical splitter section into optical intensity variation, and the negative optical signal being obtained by inverting the polarity of the positive optical signal;  
20      a first photoelectric conversion section for converting the positive optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section into an address signal and outputting the address signal to the path switching section; and  
25      a second photoelectric conversion section for converting the negative optical signal output from the phase/intensity

conversion section into an address signal, and outputting the address signal to the optical phase adjustment section.

38. The router according to claim 35, wherein,  
5       the photoelectric conversion section converts an intensity of the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section to logic value 1 if the intensity is equal to or less than a predetermined threshold value and to logic value 0 if the intensity is greater than the predetermined threshold value, thereby  
10 extracting the address signal.

39. The router according to claim 36, wherein,  
the photoelectric conversion section converts an intensity of the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section to logic value 1 if the intensity is equal to or less than a predetermined threshold value and to logic value 0 if the intensity is greater than the predetermined threshold value, thereby  
15 extracting the address signal.

20       40. The router according to claim 37, wherein,  
the photoelectric conversion section converts an intensity of the optical signal output from the phase/intensity conversion section to logic value 1 if the intensity is equal to or less than a predetermined threshold value and to logic value 0 if the intensity  
25 is greater than the predetermined threshold value, thereby

extracting the address signal.

41. The router according to claim 38, wherein,  
the threshold value is equal to or greater than a value which  
5 is 1/4 as large as a difference between an optical intensity of  
the optical packet input to the optical splitter section at logic  
value 1 and an optical intensity of the optical packet at logic  
value 0, and is equal to or less than a value which is 1/2 as large  
as the optical intensity of the optical packet at logic value 0.

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42. The router according to claim 39, wherein,  
the threshold value is equal to or greater than a value which  
is 1/4 as large as a difference between an optical intensity of  
the optical packet input to the optical splitter section at logic  
15 value 1 and an optical intensity of the optical packet at logic  
value 0, and is equal to or less than a value which is 1/2 as large  
as the optical intensity of the optical packet at logic value 0.

43. The router according to claim 40, wherein,  
20 the threshold value is equal to or greater than a value which  
is 1/4 as large as a difference between an optical intensity of  
the optical packet input to the optical splitter section at logic  
value 1 and an optical intensity of the optical packet at logic  
value 0, and is equal to or less than a value which is 1/2 as large  
25 as the optical intensity of the optical packet at logic value 0.

44. The router according to claim 35, wherein,  
the phase/intensity conversion section comprises a  
Mach-Zehnder interferometer.

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45. The router according to claim 36, wherein,  
the phase/intensity conversion section comprises a  
Mach-Zehnder interferometer.

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46. The router according to claim 37, wherein,  
the phase/intensity conversion section comprises a  
Mach-Zehnder interferometer.

47. The router according to claim 35, wherein,  
15 the phase/intensity conversion section outputs two optical  
signals whose modulated components are out of phase.

48. The router according to claim 47, wherein,  
the photoelectric conversion section comprises two  
20 photodiodes for respectively detecting the two optical signals  
output from the phase/intensity conversion section.